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Successful business owners often play important roles in their communities through business and social groups, or participation in nonprofit organizations and faith-based groups. Through leadership or active membership in these organizations, they seek to make their communities better through a number of ways.

David Futcher is a good example of this entrepreneurial spirit. The Kelso, Washington CPA has devoted much of his time to various civic groups, the local chamber of commerce and several committees in this southwest Washington town about 45 miles northwest of Portland. It also inspired him to run for, win and serve as a city councilman since 2005. And it's no surprise that he was recently selected as mayor of Kelso. (www.Kelso.gov)

"Our city has been going through some major changes because of a shift in its economy from mostly logging and timber-related products to more retail and service-oriented," according to David. "So, we've been focusing on economic development issues to attract additional businesses to our area."

He points to Kelso's proximity to Vancouver, Washington and Portland, Oregon, and its affordable real estate prices, as giving the city the opportunity to develop into a commuter suburb for these cities. Additionally, Kelso's location on Interstate 5 and its railroad and river access provide it with key transportation advantages that are helping to lure new industry.

"There's a lot of energy in our business community as we redefine the local market; and as new businesses and residents move in, it helps lower

the tax burden for everyone.” The largest employers in the county include

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which allows him to offer investment advisory services. He sees this investment side of the practice as a more profitable service area for the practice and has been trying to find more time to focus on it.

With Portland and Vancouver less than an hour away, the practice has had occasional staffing challenges. But David has successfully employed various remote access programs to help retain some valuable staff members who otherwise might have left. The firm has also adopted other technologies that have helped it attain greater productivity, including a transition to a completely paperless workflow three years ago and dual-screen monitors at all workstations. They earned an exceptional score of 450 on the Productivity Survey, a free online tool that helps public accounting firms assess their use of technology and best practice processes, and provides actionable recommendations for improvement (www.CPATechAdvisor.com/productivity).

David was also honored as one of the future leaders of the profession in this magazine's 2006 “40 Under 40” program (www.CPATechAdvisor.com/go/1317).

He sees his role as a local CPA as a bonus to his duties as mayor because it gives him a good grasp on the economic concerns of businesses in the area and allows him to act as a liaison and to make the city more friendly to businesses and responsive to citizen needs.

In addition to keeping up with modern technologies, David also brings a refreshing view of work-life balance into his practice. Throughout most of the year, the offices are closed on Fridays, and even during tax season when they do work on Fridays, he estimates that he and the staff average less than 50-hour weeks. That said, he is always responsive to clients and occasionally uses remote access functions from home, but not in excess.

“It’s always been my philosophy that you work so that you can

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works as a mental health counselor for Cowlitz County Guidance Association.

David had interned at both large and small practices while in college, and actually took a semester off during his senior year to fully participate in tax season. When they moved west, David joined the practice he would later lead, after leaving briefly to try working in-house for a corporation. He says that experience let him know how much more he preferred a public practice environment.

He bought out the firm in 2001 and merged practices with his current partner Jerri in 2004.

His time might seem somewhat taxed, what with managing the practice, mayoral functions, civic groups and treasurer duties at Castle Rock Seventh-Day Adventist church, but David also greatly cherishes his family. He makes a point of blocking out time for sons Andruw (11) and Greg (7) in his calendar to make sure he spends enough with them, whether it’s hanging out at home or going to the family’s beach house in Long Beach, Washington, about an hour and a half away.

At the coast, David says the family mostly just unwinds, enjoys the slower pace and plays games, and he proudly notes that the kids still can’t beat him at his favorite video game, Mario Kart. But he also admits that they’re getting better. He is also an avid Atlanta Braves fan and “rarely misses a game (you can take the boy out of the south, but you can’t take the south out of the boy). Too bad the season will be over and he won’t be able to catch a live game when the family heads to Atlanta for his mother’s birthday later this year.

David seems to have pretty well accomplished the work-life balancing act. As far as his political life, he says he has enjoyed it so far, but has no plans on going beyond the mayoral level.

“It really has been an incredible educational experience,” he

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